



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Steps taken to prevent Exotic Newcastle Disease

State prohibits moving birds into Washington from some California and Nevada counties

OLYMPIA – To keep the bird virus known as “Exotic Newcastle Disease” out of Washington, the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) on Jan. 15 adopted a rule that prohibits moving all bird species from counties where the disease is confirmed in California and Nevada into this state. The rule, which will remain in effect for 120 days, also requires anyone who organizes a bird show, auction, competition or other avian event, to immediately notify WSDA of the event at (360) 902-1878. And, people who participate in the event must certify in writing that their birds and equipment used to care for birds have not been in the quarantine area.

Exotic Newcastle is not a human health threat and does not affect the safety of chicken meat or eggs. It was diagnosed in October in backyard poultry flocks in Los Angeles County, California and has spread to several commercial egg-laying facilities. This week it was confirmed in a backyard flock in Las Vegas, Nevada. To stop the disease, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has quarantined counties in both states. As of Jan. 17, the quarantine includes Clark County in Nevada and the following Southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial and Ventura. Counties may be added if the disease spreads.

WSDA prohibits moving live or dead birds of all types, including poultry, game birds, hatching eggs, birds customarily used for household pets, poultry products, poultry waste, and vehicles, equipment and other materials that could transmit the disease from the quarantined counties into Washington. This includes vehicles that leave Washington to deliver live birds into the quarantine zone and then return to this state, unless they are certified clean and disinfected by the USDA. Drivers must provide proof of disinfection upon request by an agriculture inspector.

The rule does not apply to eggs that have been washed sanitized and packed in new material.

Exotic Newcastle Disease is extremely contagious. It affects all species of birds and is spread by contact with infected birds or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus can survive for several weeks in warm and humid environments and indefinitely in frozen materials. Signs of illness include sneezing, coughing, nasal discharge; diarrhea; drop in egg production and death in birds. However, it is so virulent that many birds die without showing any signs.

For a copy of the rule or more information on Exotic Newcastle Disease, visit WSDA’s Web site at

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/ENDdefault.htm> or USDA’s Web site at

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/enc/exotinc.html>.